

# ΠΕΡΙ ΟΜΗΡΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΗΣΙΟΔΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΓΕΝΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΓΩΝΟΣ ΑΥΤΩΝ

- 1 Ὅμηρον καὶ Ἡσίοδον τοὺς θειοτάτους ποιητὰς πάν-  
τες ἄνθρωποι πολίτας ἰδίους εὖχονται λέγεσθαι. ἀλλ'  
Ἡσίοδος μὲν τὴν ἰδίαν ὀνομάσας πατρίδα πάντας τῆς  
φιλονικίας ἀπήλλαξεν εἰπὼν (Op.639) ὥς ὁ πατὴρ  
αὐτοῦ

εἶσατο δ' ἄγχ' Ἑλικῶνος οἷζυρῇ ἐνὶ κώμῃ,  
Ἄσκρι, χεῖμα κακῇ, θέρει ἀργαλέῃ, οὐδέ ποτ'  
ἔσθλῃ.

- 2 Ὅμηρον δὲ πᾶσαι ὥς εἰπεῖν αἱ πόλεις καὶ οἱ ἔποικοι  
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γε Σμυρναῖοι Μέλητος ὄντα τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῖς ποταμοῦ  
καὶ Κρηθῆδος νύμφης κεκλησθαι φασὶ πρότερον  
Μελησιγένῃ, ὕστερον μέντοι τυφλωθέντα Ὅμηρον  
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σιν ἴδιον εἶναι πολίτην, λέγοντες καὶ περισώζεσθαι  
τινας ἐκ τοῦ γένους αὐτοῦ παρ' αὐτοῖς Ὀμηρίδας  
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## 1. THE CONTEST OF HOMER AND HESIOD

Homer and Hesiod are the most inspired of poets, and all mankind would like to have them reckoned as their own fellow-citizens. Hesiod at least, by naming his own homeland, precluded any rivalry: he said that his father

settled near Helicon in a miserable village,  
Ascra, bad in winter, foul in summer, good at no time.

With Homer, on the other hand, practically all cities and their inhabitants claim that he was born among them. First of all, the Smyrnaeans say that he was the son of their local river Meles and of a nymph Cretheis, and that he was formerly called Melesigenes,<sup>1</sup> but later, after becoming blind, was renamed Homer, from the ordinary term applied to that condition among them.<sup>2</sup> The Chians, again, produce evidence that he was a citizen of theirs, saying that some of his descendants actually survive among them, known as Homeridai. And the Colophonians even point to a spot

<sup>1</sup> Understood as "Meles-born."

<sup>2</sup> According to Ephorus (*FGrHist* 70 F 1), *homēros* was an Aeolic word meaning "blind."

ἐν ᾧ φασιν αὐτὸν γράμματα διδάσκοντα τῆς ποιήσεως ἄρξασθαι καὶ ποιῆσαι πρῶτον τὸν Μαργίτην.

- 3     περὶ δὲ τῶν γονέων αὐτοῦ πάλιν πολλὴ διαφωνία παρὰ πᾶσιν ἐστίν. Ἑλλάνικος μὲν γὰρ (fr. 5 Fowler) καὶ Κλεάνθης (Neanthes 84 F 40) Μαίονα λέγουσιν, Εὐγαίων δὲ (Euagon fr. 2 Fowler) Μέλητα, Καλλικλῆς δὲ (758 F 13) <Δ>μασαγόραν,<sup>1</sup> Δημόκριτος<sup>2</sup> δὲ ὁ Τροϊζήνιος (Demetrius *Supp. Hell.* 378) Δαήμονα<sup>3</sup> ἔμπορον, ἔνιοι δὲ Θαμύραν, Αἰγύπτιοι δὲ Μενέμαχον ἱερογραμματέα, εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ Τηλέμαχον τὸν Ὀδυσσέως· μητέρα δὲ οἱ μὲν Μῆτιν, οἱ δὲ Κρηθηΐδα, οἱ δὲ Θεμίστην,<sup>4</sup> οἱ δὲ Ἑρνηθώ,<sup>5</sup> ἔνιοι δὲ Ἰθακησίαν τινὰ ὑπὸ Φοινίκων ἀπεμποληθεῖσαν, οἱ δὲ Καλλιόπην τὴν Μοῦσαν, τινὲς δὲ Πολυκάστην τὴν Νέστορος.

ἐκαλεῖτο δὲ Μέλης, ὡς δὲ τινὲς φασι Μελησιγένης, ὡς δὲ ἔνιοι Ἄλτης.<sup>6</sup> ὀνομασθῆναι <δὲ> αὐτόν φασί τινες Ὅμηρον διὰ τὸ τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ Ὅμηρον δοθῆναι ὑπὸ Κυπρίων Πέρσαις· οἱ δὲ διὰ τὴν πῆρωσιν τῶν ὀμμάτων· παρὰ γὰρ τοῖς Αἰολεῦσιν οὕτως οἱ πηροὶ καλοῦνται.

ὅπερ δὲ ἀκηκόαμεν ἐπὶ τοῦ θειοτάτου αὐτοκράτορος Ἀδριανοῦ εἰρημένον ὑπὸ τῆς Πυθίας περὶ Ὁμήρου, ἐκθησόμεθα. τοῦ γὰρ βασιλέως πνυθόμενου πόθεν

<sup>1</sup> μασαγόραν cod.: Δμασαγ- Barnes ex Eust. *Od.* 1713.18: Δημαγ- Alcaeus epigr. 22 Gow-Page.

<sup>2</sup> Δημοκρίνης vit. Rom.     <sup>3</sup> Ἀλήμονα vit. Rom.

<sup>4</sup> Θεμιστώ Barnes e Paus. 10.24.3.

<sup>5</sup> Ἑρνηθώ Westermann: εὐγνηθώ cod.

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where they say Homer, as a teacher of reading and writing, started his poetic career and composed the *Margites* as his first work.

As to his parents there is again much disagreement in all the sources. For Hellanicus and Cleanthes<sup>3</sup> say (his father) was Maion, Eugaion says Meles, Callicles Dmasagoras, Democritus of Troezen<sup>4</sup> a merchant Daëmon, some say Thamyras, the Egyptians say a temple scribe Menemachus, and there are those who say it was Telemachus the son of Odysseus. As for his mother, some say Metis, some Cretheis, some Themiste, some Hyrnetho, some an Ithacan woman sold abroad by Phoenicians, some the Muse Calliope, and some Nestor's daughter Polycaste.

He was called Meles, or as some say, Melesigenes, or as others say, Altes. And some say he was named Homer because his father was given by the Cyprians to the Persians as a hostage (*homēros*); others say it was because of his ocular handicap, as among the Aeolians the handicapped are so called.

But we will set forth what we have heard stated about Homer by the Pythia in the time of the most godly emperor Hadrian. When he enquired where Homer came

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps an error for Neanthes (of Cyzicus). In what follows, the compiler has made a list of couples into separate lists of fathers and mothers.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps an error for Demetrius of Troezen, a poet of the Augustan period.

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<sup>6</sup> Ἀλτῆς Welcker (Athenocles ap. sch. *Il.* 22.51): ἀύλητῆν cod.

Ὅμηρος καὶ τίνος, ἀπεφοίβασε δι' ἑξαμέτρου τόνδε  
τὸν τρόπον·

ἄγνωστόν μ' ἔρειαι γενεὴν καὶ πατρίδα γαῖαν  
ἀμβροσίου Σειρήνος. ἔδος δ' Ἰθακήσιός ἐστιν,  
Τηλέμαχος δὲ πατὴρ καὶ Νεστορὲ Πoλυκάστη<sup>7</sup>  
μήτηρ, ἣ μιν ἔτικτε βροτῶν πέρι<sup>8</sup> πάνσοφον  
ἄνδρα.

οἷς μάλιστα δεῖ πιστεύειν διὰ τε τὸν πνθόμενον καὶ  
τὸν ἀποκρινάμενον, ἄλλως τε οὕτως τοῦ ποιητοῦ μεγα-  
λοφυνῶς τὸν προπάτορα διὰ τῶν ἐπῶν δεδοξακότος.

4 ἔνιοι μὲν οὖν αὐτὸν προγενέστερον Ἑσιόδου φασὶν  
εἶναι, τινὲς δὲ νεώτερον καὶ συγγενῇ. γενεαλογοῦσι δὲ  
οὕτως· Ἀπόλλωνός φασι καὶ Θωώσης τῆς Ποσειδῶνος  
γενέσθαι Λίνον, Λίνου δὲ Πίερον, Πιέρου δὲ καὶ νύμ-  
φης Μεθώνης Οἰάγρον, Οἰάγρου δὲ καὶ Καλλιόπης  
Ὅρφέα, Ὅρφέως δὲ Ὅρτην, <τοῦ δὲ Εὐκλέα,><sup>9</sup> τοῦ δὲ  
Ἄρμονίδην,<sup>10</sup> τοῦ δὲ Φιλοτέρπην, τοῦ δὲ Εὐφῆμον, τοῦ  
δὲ Ἐπιφράδην, τοῦ δὲ Μελάνωπον, τούτου δὲ Δίου καὶ  
Ἀπέλλαιον· Δίου δὲ καὶ Πυκิมήδης τῆς Ἀπόλλωνος  
θυγατρὸς Ἑσιόδου καὶ Πέρσην, Ἀπελλαίου<sup>11</sup> δὲ Μαί-  
ονα, Μαίονος δὲ θυγατρὸς καὶ Μέλητος τοῦ ποταμοῦ  
Ὅμηρον.

5 τινὲς δὲ συνακμάσαι φασὶν αὐτούς, ὥστε καὶ ἀγω-  
νίσασθαι ὁμόσε <γενομένους><sup>12</sup> ἐν Αὐλίδι τῆς Βοι-

<sup>7</sup> Πολυκάστη (ut supra) Nietzsche: ἐπικάστη cod.

<sup>8</sup> πέρι West: πολυ cod.      <sup>9</sup> < > add. Goettling ex Suda.

## 1. THE CONTEST

from and whose son he was, she made her inspired utterance in hexameters as follows:

You ask me the unknown lineage and fatherland  
of an immortal Siren. As to his home, he is an

Ithacan;

Telemachus was his father, and Nestor's daughter  
Polycaste

his mother who bore him, a man outstanding for his  
all-round expertise.

We should treat these statements as the most trustworthy, given the identity of the enquirer and the responder, not to mention the fact that the poet has so magnificently glorified his paternal grandfather in his poetry.

Now some say that he was older than Hesiod, others that he was younger, and related to him. This is the genealogy they give: from Apollo and Thoösa, daughter of Poseidon, they say Linus was born, from Linus Pierus, from Pierus and the nymph Methone Oeagrus, from Oeagrus and Calliope Orpheus, from Orpheus Ortes, <from him Eucles,> from him Harmonides, from him Philoterpes, from him Euphemus, from him Epiphrades, from him Melanopus, and from him Dios and Apellaios; from Dios and Apollo's daughter Pykimede, Hesiod and Perses; from Apellaios Maion, and from a daughter of Maion and the river Meles, Homer.

Some, however, say that they flourished at the same time, so as actually to compete with each other after

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<sup>10</sup> ἁρμονίδην cod: Ἰδμον- Proclus, *Suda*.

<sup>11</sup> Ἀπελλαίου Sittl: πέρσον cod.

<sup>12</sup> < > add. Busse.

ωτίας. ποιήσαντα γὰρ τὸν Μαργίτην Ὅμηρον περι-  
έρχεσθαι κατὰ πόλιν ράψωιδοῦντα, ἐλθόντα δὲ καὶ εἰς  
Δελφοὺς περὶ τῆς πατρίδος αὐτοῦ πυνθάνεσθαι τίς  
εἴη, τὴν δὲ Πυθίαν εἰπεῖν·

ἔστιν Ἴος νῆσος μητρὸς πατρίς, ἣ σε θανόντα  
δέξεται· ἀλλὰ νέων παίδων αἰνιγμα φύλαξαι.

- τὸν δὲ ἀκούσαντα περιστάσθαι μὲν τὴν εἰς Ἴον  
6 ἄφιξιν, διατρίβειν δὲ περὶ τὴν ἐκεῖ χώραν. | κατὰ δὲ  
τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον Γανύκτωρ ἐπιτάφιον τοῦ πατρὸς  
Ἀμφιδάμαντος βασιλέως Εὐβοίας ἐπιτελῶν πάντας  
τοὺς ἐπισήμους ἄνδρας οὐ μόνον ῥώμῃ καὶ τάχει  
ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφαίαι ἐπὶ τὸν ἀγῶνα μεγάλαις δωρεαῖς  
τιμῶν συνεκάλεσεν. καὶ οὗτοι οὖν ἐκ τύχης, ὥς φασι,  
συμβαλόντες ἀλλήλοις ἦλθον εἰς τὴν Χαλκίδα. τοῦ δὲ  
ἀγῶνος ἄλλοι τέ τινες τῶν ἐπισήμων Χαλκιδέων ἐκα-  
θέζοντο κριταὶ καὶ μετ' αὐτῶν Πανήδης, ἀδελφὸς ὦν  
τοῦ τετελευτηκότος. ἀμφοτέρων δὲ τῶν ποιητῶν θαν-  
μαστῶς ἀγωνισαμένων νικῆσαί φασι τὸν Ἡσίοδον  
τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον· προελθόντα γὰρ εἰς τὸ μέσον  
πυνθάνεσθαι τοῦ Ὀμήρου καθ' ἐν ἑκαστον, τὸν δὲ  
7 Ὅμηρον ἀποκρίνασθαι. | φῆσιν οὖν Ἡσίοδος·

υἱὲ Μέλητος Ὅμηρε, θεῶν ἅπο μῆδεα εἰδώς,  
εἵπ' ἄγε μοι πάμπρωτα, τί φέρτατόν ἐστι  
βροτοῖσιν;

Ὅμηρος·



## 1. THE CONTEST

meeting up at Aulis in Boeotia. For after composing the *Margites*, they say, Homer went round from town to town reciting, and on coming to Delphi he enquired what his native land was; and the Pythia said:

There is an island Ios, your mother's home, which on  
your death  
will receive you. Only beware the young boys' riddle.

After hearing this, they say, he avoided going on to Ios, and remained in those parts. Around the same time Ganyctor was organizing the funeral of his father Amphidamas, a king in Euboea, and he invited to the contest all the men who were noted not only for strength and speed at running, but also for intellectual accomplishments, honoring them with sizeable gifts. So these two also, having met up by chance, as they say, went to Chalcis. At the contest, among other Chalcidian notables who were sitting as judges, there was Panedes, a brother of the deceased. And after both poets had put up wonderful performances, they say that Hesiod was the winner, in the following manner. He came forward onto the floor and set Homer a series of questions, to which Homer responded. So Hesiod said:

Son of Meles, Homer, with your wisdom from the  
gods,  
come, tell me first of all, what is the best thing for  
mortals?

Homer:

ἀρχὴν μὲν μὴ φῦναι ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἄριστον,  
φύντα δ' ὅπως ὤκιστα πύλας Αἴδαο περήσαι.

Ἡσίοδος τὸ δεύτερον·

εἶπ' ἄγε μοι καὶ τοῦτο, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ὅμηρε,  
τί θνητοῖς κάλλιστον οὔτεαι ἐν φρεσὶν εἶναι;

ὁ δέ (Od. 9.6–11)·

ὅππότε' ἂν εὐφροσύνη μὲν ἔχῃ κατά δῆμον  
ἅπαντα,  
δαιτυμόνες δ' ἀνὰ δώματ' ἀκονάζωνται ἀοιδοῦ  
ἤμενοι ἐξείης, παρὰ δὲ πλήθωσι τράπεζαι  
σίτου καὶ κρειῶν, μέθυ δ' ἐκ κρητῆρος ἀφύσσων  
οἰνοχόος φορέησι καὶ ἐγχείῃ δεπάεσσιν·  
τοῦτό τί μοι κάλλιστον ἐνὶ φρεσὶν εἶδεται εἶναι.

- 8 ῥηθέντων δὲ τούτων τῶν ἐπῶν, οὕτως σφοδρῶς φασὶ  
θαυμασθῆναι τοὺς στίχους ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὥστε  
χρυσοὺς αὐτοὺς προσαγορευθῆναι, καὶ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ἐν  
ταῖς κοιναῖς θυσίαις πρὸ τῶν δείπνων καὶ σποινδῶν  
προκατεύχεσθαι πάντας.

ὁ δὲ Ἡσίοδος, ἀχθεσθεὶς ἐπὶ τῇ Ὀμήρου εὐ-  
ημερία, ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν ἀπόρων ὥρμησεν ἐπερώτησιν,  
καὶ φησι τούσδε τοὺς στίχους·

## 1. THE CONTEST

Not to be born in the first place is best for men on earth,  
or if born, to pass through Hades' gates as fast as possible.<sup>5</sup>

Hesiod again:

Come, tell me this too, godlike Homer:  
what do you consider to be the finest thing for mortals?

He replied:

When good cheer prevails throughout the people,  
and banqueters in the hall are listening to a bard,  
sitting in line, and beside them the tables are laden  
with bread and meat; and drawing wine from the  
bowl  
the wine waiter brings it round and pours it in the  
cups—  
this sort of thing is what seems to me the finest.

When these verses were spoken, they say the lines were so intensely admired by the Greeks that they were dubbed "golden," and even today everyone invokes them at public sacrifices before the feasting and libations.

But Hesiod, vexed at Homer's success, turned to asking conundrums, and spoke these lines:

<sup>5</sup> Stobaeus 4.52.22 quotes these lines as from Alcidas' *Mouseion*. They are found, with added pentameters, as lines 425–428 of the *Theognidea*. For the sentiment see also Bacchylides 5.160; Euripides, fr. 285.1–2; Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 1224–1227; Alexis, fr. 145.14–16 K.–A.

Μοῦσ' ἄγε μοι, τά τ' ἔόντα τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό  
 τ' ἔόντα,  
 τῶν μὲν μηδὲν αἶειδε, σὺ δ' ἄλλης μνήσαι αἰοιδῆς.  
 ὁ δὲ Ὅμηρος βουλόμενος ἀκολούθως τὸ ἄπορον λῦ-  
 σαί φησιν·

οὐδέ ποτ' ἀμφὶ Διὸς τύμβωι καναχήποδες ἵπποι  
 ἄρματα συντρίβουσιν ἐρίζοντες περὶ νίκης.

- 9 καλῶς δὲ καὶ ἐν τούτοις ἀπαντήσαντος, ἐπὶ τὰς  
 ἀμφιβόλους γνώμας ὥρμησεν ὁ Ἡσιόδος, καὶ πλείο-  
 νας στίχους λέγων ἡξίου καθ' ἓνα ἕκαστον συμφώνως  
 ἀποκρίνασθαι τὸν Ὅμηρον. ἔστιν οὖν ὁ μὲν πρῶτος  
 Ἡσιόδου, ὁ δὲ ἐξῆς Ὀμήρου, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ διὰ δύο  
 στίχων τὴν ἐπερώτησιν ποιουμένου τοῦ Ἡσιόδου·

δεῖπνον ἔπειθ' εἵλοντο βοῶν κρέα καὶ χένας  
 ἵππων  
 —ἐκλυνον ἰδρώοντας, ἐπεὶ πολέμοιο κορέσθην.  
 καὶ Φρύγες, οἳ πάντων ἀνδρῶν ἐπὶ νηυσὶν  
 ἄριστοι  
 —ἀνδράσι ληϊστήρσιν ἐπ' ἀκτῆς δόρπα πένεσθαι.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> δόρπα πένεσθαι Wilamowitz: δόρπον ἐλέσθαι cod.

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Come now, Muse, of things that are and will be and  
were aforetime—  
sing nothing of those, but take heed for other singing.

Homer, looking for a logical solution to the problem, said:

Never shall clattering steeds about the tomb of Zeus  
smash chariots as they contend for victory.<sup>6</sup>

As he had countered well in this challenge too, Hesiod turned to ambivalent propositions: he spoke a number of lines, and required Homer to supply a harmonious continuation for each one in turn. So the first line in each case is Hesiod's, and the following one Homer's, except that sometimes Hesiod uses two lines for his question:<sup>7</sup>

Then they dined on beef and the horses' necks—  
They cleansed of sweat, having had their fill of  
fighting.<sup>8</sup>

And the Phrygians, who of all men on shipboard are  
the finest—<sup>9</sup>

At preparing supper on shore for a pirate crew.

<sup>6</sup> Plutarch, *Symposium of the Seven Sages* 154a, gives a version of this exchange in which the problem is set by the cyclic poet Lesches and it is Hesiod who solves it, thus winning the contest.

<sup>7</sup> The author has not fully understood the riddles he is using. Some of them are double riddles, in which the responder, in solving the problem, at the same time sets a new one for the first speaker.

<sup>8</sup> These two lines appear in a slightly different form in Aristophanes, *Peace* 1282–1283.

<sup>9</sup> This is a paradox because to the Greeks the Phrygians were a byword for cowardice.

χερσὶ βαλὼν ἰοὺς ἀνόμων κατὰ φῦλα Γιγάντων  
— Ἡρακλῆς ἀπέλυσεν ἀπ' ὤμων καμπύλα τόξα.<sup>14</sup>

οὗτος ἀνὴρ ἀνδρός τ' ἀγαθοῦ καὶ ἀνάλκιδός  
ἐστιν

— μητρός, ἐπεὶ πόλεμος χαλεπὸς πάσησι γυναιξίν.

οὗτ' ἄρ σοί γε πατήρ ἐμίγη καὶ πότνια μήτηρ  
— τῶμα, τό γ' ἐσπείραντο† διὰ χρυσῆν  
Ἀφροδίτην.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δμῆθη γάμωι Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα  
— Καλλιστῶ κατέπεφνεν ἀπ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖκο>.

ὥς οἱ μὲν δαίνυντο πανήμεροι, οὐδὲν ἔχοντες  
— οἴκοθεν, ἀλλὰ παρεῖχεν ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν  
Ἀγαμέμνων.

δεῖπνον δειπνήσαντες ἐνὶ σποδῶι αἰθαλοέσσηι  
— σύλλεγον ὅστέα λευκὰ Διὸς κατατεθνεῖωτος  
— παιδὸς ὑπερθύμου Σαρπηδόνος ἀντιθέοιο.

ἡμεῖς δ' ἄμ πεδίον Σιμοούντιον † ἤμενοι οὕτως†  
— ἵομεν ἐκ νηῶν ὁδὸν ἀμφ' ὤμοισιν ἔχοντες  
— φάσγανα κωπήεντα καὶ αἰγανέας δολιχαύλους.

δὴ τότε ἄριστῆ<ες> κοῦροι χεῖρεσσι θαλάσσης

<sup>14</sup> Hos duos versus hoc ordine Nietzsche: inverso cod. ἰοὺς Nietzsche, ἀνόμων Wilamowitz: ἰοῖσιν ὅλλων cod.

## 1. THE CONTEST

After shooting arrows at the lawless Giants with his hands—

Heracles undid from his shoulders his bent bow.

This man's father is brave, and a coward—

His mother, as fighting is a hard challenge for all women.

Nor with you did your father and lady mother make love—

†the body which†<sup>10</sup> they sowed through golden Aphrodite.

And as she had surrendered to sex, Artemis profuse of arrows—<sup>11</sup>

Slew Callisto with a shot from her silver bow.

So they feasted throughout the day with no food—

Of their own; it was provided by Agamemnon, lord of men.

After making their feast among the sooty ashes—

They collected the white bones of the dead one, Zeus'—

Proud son, the godlike Sarpedon.

We over the plain of Simois †sitting thus†—

Stepped out from the ships our path slung round our shoulders—

Our hilted swords and long-socketed javelins.

Then forsooth the heroic youths with hands from the sea—

<sup>10</sup> Unintelligible.

<sup>11</sup> Artemis was an eternal virgin.

—ἄσμενοι ἐσσυμένως τε ἀπείρυσαν ὠκύαλον ναῦν.

Κολχίδ' ἔπειτ' ἤγοντο<sup>15</sup> καὶ Αἰήτην βασιλῆα  
—φεύγον, ἐπεὶ γίνωσκον ἀνέστιον ἦδ' ἀθέμιστον.

αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ σπείσαν τε καὶ ἔκπιον οἶδμα  
θαλάσσης

—ποντοπορεῖν ἤμελλον εὐσσέλμων ἐπὶ νηῶν.

τοῖσιν δ' Ἀτρείδης μεγάλ' εὔχετο πᾶσιν ὀλέσθαι  
—μηδέ ποτ' ἐν πόντῳ, καὶ φωνήσας ἔπος ηὔδα·  
ἐσθίετ' ὦ ξεῖνοι, καὶ πίνετε· μηδέ τις ὕμων  
οἴκαδε νοστήσειε φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν  
—πημανθείς, ἀλλ' αὖθις ἀπήμονες οἴκαδ' ἵκοισθε.

10 πρὸς πάντα δὲ τοῦ Ὀμήρου καλῶς ἀπαντήσαντος  
πάλιν φησὶν ὁ Ἡσίοδος·

τοῦτό τι δὴ μοι μῦνον ἐειρομένῳ κατάλεξον·  
πόσσοι ἅμ' Ἀτρείδησιν ἐς Ἴλιον ἦλθον Ἀχαιοί;

ὃ δὲ διὰ λογιστικοῦ προβλήματος ἀποκρίνεται οὕτως·

πεντήκοντ' ἦσαν πυρὸς ἐσχάραι, ἐν δὲ ἐκάστη  
πεντήκοντ' ὀβελοί, περὶ δὲ κρέα πεντήκοντα·  
τρὶς δὲ τριηκόσιοι περὶ ἐν κρέας ἦσαν Ἀχαιοί.

{τοῦτο δὲ εὐρίσκεται πλήθος ἄπιστον· τῶν γὰρ ἐσχα-  
ρῶν οὐσῶν πεντήκοντα, ὀβελίσκοι γίνονται πεντακό-

<sup>15</sup> ἤγοντο Wilamowitz: ἵκοντο cod.



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Gladly and swift hauled up the speedy ship.

The Colchian maid<sup>12</sup> then they bore away, and king  
Aietes—

They fled, for they saw he was inhospitable and  
uncivilized.

But when they had made libation and drunk up the  
sea swell—

They prepared to sail in their well-benched ships.

The son of Atreus prayed loud for them all, that they  
should perish—

At sea never, and he spoke this utterance:

“Eat, my guests, and drink, and may none of you  
return home to his dear homeland—

Harmed, but may you all arrive home in safety.”

As Homer had countered everything satisfactorily,  
Hesiod tried again:

Just tell me this one little thing that I ask:  
how many Achaeans went to Troy with the sons of  
Atreus?

He answered by means of an arithmetical problem:

There were fifty fire-hearths, and in each one  
fifty spits, with fifty pieces of meat on them,  
and thrice three hundred Achaeans round one piece  
of meat.

{This works out as an incredible quantity, for if there are 50  
hearths, the spits come out at 2,500, and the meat pieces at

<sup>12</sup> Medea.

σιοι καὶ χιλιάδες β', κρεῶν δὲ δεκαδύο μυριάδες <καὶ χιλιάδες> ἐ', †ϋν† . . .}¹⁶

- 11 κατὰ πάντα δὴ τοῦ Ὀμήρου ὑπερτεροῦντος, φθονῶν ὁ Ἡσίοδος ἄρχεται πάλιν·

υἱὲ Μέλητος Ὀμηρ', εἴ περ τιμῶσί σε Μοῦσαι,  
ὥς λόγος, ὑψίστοι<ο> Διὸς μεγάλοιο θύγατρες,  
λέξον μέτρῳ¹⁷ ἐναρμόζων, ὅ τι δὴ θνητοῖσιν  
κάλλιστόν <τε> καὶ ἔχθιστον <πο>θέω γὰρ  
ἀκοῦσαι.

ὁ δὲ φησιν·

Ἡσίοδ' ἔκγονε Δίου, ἐκόντά με ταῦτα κελεύεις  
εἰπεῖν· αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ μάλα τοι πρόφρων ἀγορεύσω.  
κάλλιστον μὲν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἔσται μέτρον εἶναι  
αὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ, τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἔχθιστον ἀπάντων.  
ἄλλο δὲ πᾶν ὅ τι σῶι θυμῷ φίλον ἐστὶν ἐρώτα.

πῶς ἂν ἄριστ' οἰκοῖντο πόλεις καὶ ἐν ἡθεσι  
ποίοις;

—εἰ μὴ κερδαίνειν ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσχροῶν ἐθέλοιεν,  
οἱ δ' ἀγαθοὶ τιμῶντο, δίκη δ' ἀδίκουσιν ἐπείη.

εὔχεσθαι δὲ θεοῖσι τί¹⁸ πάντων ἐστὶν ἄμεινον;  
—εὖνουν †εἶναι ἑαυτῷ†¹⁹ χρόνον ἐς τὸν ἅπαντα.

¹⁶ καὶ χιλιάδες ἐ' Boissonade: ϋν cod. Interpolationem notavit West. ¹⁷ μέτρῳ Barnes: μέτρον cod.

¹⁸ θεοῖσι τί Rohde: θεοῖς ὅτι cod.

¹⁹ E.g. εὖνουν θυμὸν ἔχειν ἀστοῖς.

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125,000, so the number of men would be 112,500,000.)<sup>13</sup>

As Homer was keeping the upper hand throughout, Hesiod in frustration began again:

Son of Meles, Homer, if the Muses esteem you  
as is said, those daughters of Zeus the highest and  
greatest,  
say—fitting it into metre—what it is for mortals  
that is finest and what worst; I am eager to hear.

He said:

Hesiod, offspring of Dios, I am willing to say  
what you bid me; I will tell you very gladly.  
The finest thing is to be the measure of good  
for oneself, and the worst of all, to be so of evil.  
Now ask me anything else you fancy.

How would cities best be run, and by what  
standards?

—If they were prepared to abstain from immoral  
profiteering,  
and the men of quality were esteemed, and  
wrongdoers punished.

And what is the best thing to pray to the gods for?

—That they be well-disposed to the city evermore.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> This looks like a Byzantine annotation, originally written in a margin; hence the Greek is damaged at the end.

<sup>14</sup> Text uncertain.

ἐν δ' ἐλαχίστῳ ἄριστον ἔχεις<sup>20</sup> ὃ τι φύεται  
εἰπεῖν;

—ὥς μὲν ἐμῇ γνώμῃ, φρένες ἐσθλαὶ στήθεσιν<sup>21</sup>  
ἀνδρῶν.

ἡ δὲ δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἀνδρείη δύναται τί;  
—κοινὰς ὠφελίας ἰδίους μόχθοισι πορίζειν.

τῆς σοφίης δὲ τί τέκμαρ ἐπ' ἀνθρώποισι  
πέφυκεν;  
—γινώσκειν τὰ παρόντ' ὀρθῶς, καιρῶι δ' ἅμ'  
ἔπεσθαι.

πιστεῦσαι δὲ βροτοῖς ποῖον χρέος ἄξιόν ἐστιν;  
—οἷς αὐτὸς κίνδυνος ἐπὶ<sup>22</sup> πραχθεῖσιν ἔπεται.

ἡ δ' εὐδαιμονία τί ποτ' ἀνθρώποισι καλεῖται;  
—λυπηθέντ' ἐλάχιστα θανεῖν ἡσθέντά <τε>  
πλείστα.

- 12 ῥηθέντων δὲ καὶ τούτων, οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες πάντες  
τὸν Ὅμηρον ἐκέλευον στεφανοῦν· ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς  
Παιήδης ἐκέλευσεν ἕκαστον τὸ κάλλιστον ἐκ τῶν  
ἰδίων ποιημάτων εἰπεῖν. Ἡσίοδος οὖν ἔφη πρῶτος  
(Op. 383–392).

Πηλεΐδων Ἀτλαγενέων ἐπιτελλομενάων  
ἄρχεσθ' ἀμητοῦ, ἀρότιό τε δυσομενάων·  
αἱ δὲ τοι νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμέρας τεσσαράκοντα  
κεκρύφεται, αὖθις δὲ περιπλομένου ἐνιαυτοῦ

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And can you say what best thing grows in smallest space?

—In my opinion, good sense in the human breast.

And what does righteousness and manliness mean?

—Providing public benefit through private strain.

And what is wisdom's birthmark upon men?

—Judging situations correctly, and seizing the moment.

And what circumstances merit putting trust in people?

—When they are equally at risk from the outcome.

And what is it that humans call happiness?

—Minimum pain and maximum pleasure before you die.

When these dicta too had been spoken, the Greeks all called for Homer to be garlanded as victor. But King Panedes told each poet to recite the finest passage from his own compositions. So Hesiod said first:

When the Pleiades born of Atlas rise before the sun,  
begin the reaping; the plowing, when they set.  
They for forty nights and days  
are hidden, and again as the year goes round

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<sup>20</sup> ἔχειν σ' cod.: corr. Hutchinson.

<sup>21</sup> στῆθυσιν West: σώμασιν cod. (cf. Stob. 3.3.45).

<sup>22</sup> ἐπὶ Stephanus: ἔτι cod.

φαίνονται τὰ πρῶτα χαρασσομένοιο σιδήρου.  
οὗτός τοι πεδίῳν πέλεται νόμος, οἳ τε θαλάσσης  
ἐγγύθι ναιετάουσ', οἳ τ' ἄγκεα βησσήεντα  
πόντου κυμαίνοντος ἀπόπροθι πίονα χῶρον  
ναίουσιν· γυμνὸν σπείρειν, γυμνὸν δὲ βοωτεῖν,  
γυμνοὺς τ' ἀμάειν, ὅτ' ἂν ὥρια πάντα πέλωνται.

μεθ' ὃν Ὅμηρος (Il. 13.126–33 + 339–344).

ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' Αἴαντας δοιοὺς ἴσταντο φάλαγγες  
καρτεραί, ἃς οὐτ' ἄν κεν Ἄρης ὀνόσαιτο μετελθῶν  
οὔτε κ' Ἀθηναίη λαοσσόος· οἳ γὰρ ἄριστοι  
κρινθέντες Τρῳάς τε καὶ Ἑκτορα δῖον ἔμμινον,  
φράξαντες δόρυ δουρί, σάκος σάκεϊ προθελύμνῳ  
ἀσπίς ἄρ' ἀσπὶδ' ἔρειδε, κόρυς κόρυν, ἀνέρα δ'  
ἀνὴρ,

ψαῦον δ' ἱππόκομοι κόρυθες λαμπροῖσι φάλαισιν  
νεύοντων· ὥς πυκνοὶ ἐφέστασαν ἀλλήλοισιν.  
ἔφριξεν δὲ μάχη φθεισίμβροτος ἐγχείησιν  
μακραίς, ἃς εἶχον ταμεσίχροας· ὅσσε δ' ἄμερδεν  
αὐγὴ χαλκείη κορύθων ἄπο λαμπομενάων  
θωρήκων τε νεοσμήκτων σακέων τε φαεινῶν,  
ἐρχομένων ἄμυδις· μάλα κεν θρασυκάρδιος εἴη,  
ὃς τότε γηθήσειεν ἰδὼν πόνον οὐδ' ἀκάχοιτο.

- 13 θαυμάσαντες δὲ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ τὸν Ὅμηρον οἱ  
Ἑλληνες ἐπήνουν, ὥς παρὰ τὸ προσῆκον γεγονότων

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they first appear at the time of iron-sharpening.  
This is the rule of the land, both for those who live  
near the sea, and for those who live in the winding  
glens  
far from the swelling sea, a rich terrain:  
naked sow and naked drive the oxen,  
and naked reap, when all is in good season.

Then came Homer:

About the two Ajaxes the battle lines stood strong  
that neither would Ares have faulted had he come  
there  
nor Athena driver of armies; for the finest  
picked men were awaiting the Trojans and lordly  
Hector,  
hedging lance with lance, shield with shield  
overlapping;  
targe pressed on targe, helm on helm, man on man,  
and the horsehair plumes touched on the bright  
crests  
as they nodded, so close they stood to one another.  
The murderous battle bristled with long spears  
that they held to slice the skin; eyes were dazzled  
with the glint of the bronze from the shining helmets,  
the fresh-polished corslets, and the bright shields  
as the armies clashed. It would have been a bold-  
hearted man  
who felt joy at sight of that toil and not dismay.

Once again the Greeks were struck with admiration  
for Homer, praising the way the verses transcended the

τῶν ἐπῶν, καὶ ἐκέλευον διδόναι τὴν νίκην. ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς τὸν Ἡσίοδον ἐστεφάνωσεν, εἰπὼν δίκαιον εἶναι τὸν ἐπὶ γεωργίαν καὶ εἰρήνην προκαλούμενον νικᾶν, οὐ τὸν πολέμους καὶ σφαγὰς διεξιόντα. τῆς μὲν οὖν νίκης οὕτως φασὶ τυχεῖν τὸν Ἡσίοδον, καὶ λαβόντα τρίποδα χαλκοῦν ἀναθεῖναι ταῖς Μούσαις ἐπιγράψαντα·

Ἡσίοδος Μούσαις Ἑλικωνίσι τόνδ' ἀνέθηκεν,  
ὕμνῳ νικήσας ἐν Χαλκίδι θείῳ Ὅμηρον.

τοῦ δὲ ἀγῶνος διαλυθέντος διέπλευσεν ὁ Ἡσίοδος εἰς Δελφούς χρησόμενος καὶ τῆς νίκης ἀπαρχὰς τῷ θεῷ ἀναθήσων. προσερχομένου δὲ αὐτοῦ τῷ ναῶι ἔνθεον γενομένην τὴν προφήτιν φασιν εἰπεῖν·

ὄλβιος οὗτος ἀνὴρ ὃς ἐμὸν δόμον ἀμφιπολεύει,  
Ἡσίοδος Μούσῃσι τετιμένος ἀθανάτησιν·  
τοῦ δ' ἦτοι κλέος ἔσται, ὅσῃν τ' ἐπικίδναται ἡώς.  
ἀλλὰ Διὸς πεφύλαξο Νεμείου κάλλιμον ἄλσος·  
κεῖθι δέ τοι θανάτοιο τέλος πεπρωμένον ἐστίν.

- 14 ὁ δὲ Ἡσίοδος ἀκούσας τοῦ χρησμοῦ τῆς Πελοποννήσου μὲν ἀνεχώρει, νομίσας τὴν ἐκεῖ Νεμέαν τὸν θεὸν λέγειν, εἰς δὲ Οἰνόην τῆς Λοκρίδος ἐλθὼν καταλύει παρ' Ἀμφιφάνει καὶ Γανύκτορι τοῖς Φηγέως παισίν, ἀγνοήσας τὸ μαντεῖον· ὁ γὰρ τόπος οὗτος ἅπας ἐκαλείτο Διὸς Νεμείου ἱερόν. διατριβῆς δὲ αὐτῷ πλείονος γενομένης ἐν τοῖς Οἰνοεῦσιν, ὑπονοήσαντες οἱ νεανίσκοι τὴν ἀδελφὴν αὐτῶν μοιχεύειν τὸν Ἡσί-



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merely fitting, and they called for him to be awarded the victory. The king, however, garlanded Hesiod, saying that it was right for the poet who encouraged people towards agriculture and peace to win, not the one who rehearsed battle and carnage. So that is how they say Hesiod got his victory, and that he received a bronze tripod and dedicated it the Muses with this inscription:

Hesiod dedicated this to the Muses of Helicon,  
having defeated in song at Chalcis the godly Homer.

When the games broke up, Hesiod sailed across to Delphi to consult the oracle and to dedicate a tithe of his victory to Apollo. As he approached the temple, they say the prophetess became possessed, and declared:

This is a fortunate man who attends my house:  
Hesiod, esteemed by the immortal Muses;  
his fame shall be known as far as the daylight  
spreads.

Only beware Nemean Zeus' fair grove,  
for there your mortal terminus is destined.

After hearing this oracle, Hesiod withdrew further away from the Peloponnese, thinking that the god meant the Nemea there, and he went to Oinoë in Locris, where he lodged with Amphiphanes and Ganyctor, the sons of Phegeus, not recognizing the reference of the prophecy, for that whole region was called sacred to Nemean Zeus. When he had stayed for some time among the people of Oinoë, the young men came to suspect that Hesiod was

οδον ἀποκτείναντες εἰς τὸ μεταξὺ τῆς Εὐβοίας καὶ τῆς  
 Λοκρίδος πέλαγος κατεπόντισαν. τοῦ δὲ νεκροῦ τρι-  
 ταίου πρὸς τὴν γῆν ὑπὸ δελφίνων προσενεχθέντος,  
 ἑορτῆς τινος ἐπιχωρίου παρ' αὐτοῖς οὔσης Ἴριον  
 ἀγνείας,<sup>23</sup> πάντες ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν ἔδραμον, καὶ τὸ  
 σῶμα γνωρίσαντες ἐκεῖνο μὲν πενθήσαντες ἔθαψαν,  
 τοὺς δὲ φονεῖς ἀνεζήτησαν. οἱ δέ, φοβηθέντες τὴν τῶν  
 πολιτῶν ὀργήν, κατασπάσαντες ἀλιευτικὸν σκάφος  
 διέπλευσαν εἰς Κρήτην· οὗς κατὰ μέσον τὸν πλοῦν ὁ  
 Ζεὺς κεραυνώσας κατεπόντωσεν, ὥς φησιν Ἀλκιδά-  
 μας ἐν Μουσεῖῳ. Ἐρατοσθένης δέ φησιν ἐν Ἡσιό-  
 δῳ<sup>24</sup> (fr. 17 Powell) Κτίμενον καὶ Ἄντιφον τοὺς  
 Γανύκτορος, ἐπὶ τῇ προειρημένῃ αἰτίᾳ ἀνελόντας  
 <τὸν ποιητὴν>,<sup>25</sup> σφαγιασθῆναι θεοῖς ξενίοις ὑπ' Εὐ-  
 ρυκλέους τοῦ μάντεως· τὴν μέντοι παρθένον τὴν  
 ἀδελφὴν τῶν προειρημένων μετὰ τὴν φθορὰν ἑαυτὴν  
 ἀναρτῆσαι· φθαρῆναι δὲ ὑπὸ τινος ξένου συνόδου τοῦ  
 Ἡσιόδου Δημῶδους ὄνομα, ὃν καὶ αὐτὸν ἀναιρεθῆναι  
 ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν φησιν. ὕστερον δὲ Ὀρχομένιοι κατὰ  
 χρησμὸν μετενέγκαντες αὐτὸν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἔθαψαν,  
 καὶ ἐπέγραψαν ἐπὶ τῷ τάφῳ·

Ἄσκη μὲν πατρίς πολυλήϊος, ἀλλὰ θανόντος  
 ὁστέα πληξίππων γῇ Μινυῶν κατέχει

<sup>23</sup> Ἴριον ἀγνείας Nietzsche ex Plut. Mor. 162e: ἀριαδνειας  
 cod.

<sup>24</sup> Ἡσιόδῳ Götting: ἐνηπόδῳ cod.

<sup>25</sup> < > add. West.

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fornicating with their sister, and they killed him by drowning him in the sea between Locris and Euboea.<sup>15</sup> His corpse was brought to land by dolphins two days later while a certain local festival was in progress, the Purification of Rhion. Everyone ran to the shore and, recognizing the body, mourned him and gave him burial, and began to seek his murderers. They, fearing their fellow citizens' wrath, pulled a fishing boat down and sailed off towards Crete. In mid voyage Zeus cast a thunderbolt and drowned them, as Alcidas says in his *Museum*. Eratosthenes in his *Hesiod*, however, says that Ganyctor's sons Ktimenos and Antiphos killed <the poet> for the reason aforesaid, and were slaughtered in sacrifice to the Gods of Hospitality by the seer Eurycles; and that the girl, their sister, hanged herself following her defloration, which had been done by a foreigner travelling with Hesiod, Demodes by name; and he says that this man too was killed by the same pair. Subsequently the Orchomenians transported Hesiod's body on the basis of an oracle and buried it in their territory, inscribing on the tombstone:

Ascra, the rich cornland, was my home, but my dead  
bones  
the horse-goading Minyans' country holds:

<sup>15</sup> The compiler has wrongly taken the Locris of the story to be the eastern Locris. It is clear from all other versions that it was Ozolian Locris. Oinoe was the later name of the place that appears in Thucydides 3.95.3 as Oineon; see W. A. Oldfather, *RE* xvii. 2192.

Ἡσιόδου, τοῦ πλείστον ἐν ἀνθρώποις κλέος  
 ἐστίν  
 ἀνδρῶν κρινομένων ἐν βασάνῳ σοφίης.

- 15 καὶ περὶ μὲν Ἡσιόδου τοσαῦτα. ὁ δὲ Ὅμηρος  
 ἀποτυχὼν τῆς νίκης περιερχόμενος ἔλεγε τὰ ποιή-  
 ματα, πρῶτον μὲν τὴν Θηβαΐδα, ἔπη ζ, ἧς ἡ ἀρχή  
 (fr. 1).

Ἄργος ἄειδε, θεά, πολυδίψιον, ἔνθεν ἄνακτες·  
 εἶτα Ἐπιγόνους,<sup>26</sup> ἔπη ζ, ὧν ἡ ἀρχή (fr. 1).

νῦν αὖθ' ὀπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἀρχώμεθα, Μοῦσαι.

φᾶσι γάρ τινες καὶ ταῦτα Ὅμηρου εἶναι. ἀκούσαντες  
 δὲ τῶν ἐπῶν οἱ Μίδου τοῦ βασιλέως παῖδες Ξάνθος  
 καὶ Γόργος παρακαλοῦσιν αὐτὸν ἐπίγραμμα ποιῆσαι  
 ἐπὶ τοῦ τάφου τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν, ἐφ' οὗ ἦν παρθένος  
 χαλκῇ τὸν Μίδου θάνατον οἰκτιζομένη. καὶ ποιεῖ οὕ-  
 τως (Epiigr. 3).

χαλκῇ παρθένος εἰμί, Μίδου δ' ἐπὶ σήματος  
 ἦμαι.

ἔστ' ἂν ὕδωρ τε νάηι καὶ δένδρεα μακρὰ τεθήληι  
 καὶ ποταμοὶ πλήθωσι, περικλύζηι δὲ θάλασσα,  
 ἥελιος δ' ἀνιὼν φαίνηι λαμπρά τε σελήνη,  
 αὐτοῦ τῇδε μένουσα πολυκλαύτῳ ἐπὶ τύμβῳ  
 σημανέω παριούσι, Μίδης ὅτι τῇδε τέθαιπται.

## 1. THE CONTEST

mine, Hesiod's, whose fame is greatest in the world  
when men are tested by the touchstone of art.

So much for Hesiod. Homer, after his defeat in the contest, went about reciting his poems: firstly the *Thebaid* (7,000 lines), which begins

Sing, goddess, of thirsty Argos, from where the lords,  
and then the *Epigoni* (7,000 lines), which begins

But now, Muses, let us begin on the younger men.

(For some say that this too is Homer's work.) When King Midas' sons Xanthos and Gorgos heard his poetry, they invited him to compose an inscription on their father's tomb, which was surmounted by a bronze figure of a girl lamenting Midas' death. He composed this:

A bronze girl am I, and I sit on Midas' monument.  
So long as water flows, and trees grow tall,  
and rivers fill, and the sea surges round coasts,  
and the sun rises and shines, and the bright moon,  
I shall remain here on this tear-stained tomb  
to tell wayfarers that Midas is buried here.

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<sup>26</sup> ἐπειγομένου cod.: corr. Barnes.

λαβὼν δὲ παρ' αὐτῶν φιάλην ἀργυρᾶν ἀνατίθησιν ἐν  
Δελφοῖς τῶι Ἀπόλλωνι, ἐπιγράψας·

Φοῖβε ἄναξ, δῶρόν τοι Ὅμηρος καλὸν ἔδωκα  
σῇσις ἐπιφροσύναις· σὺ δέ μοι κλέος αἰὲν  
ὀπάζεις.

- 16 μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα ποιεῖ τὴν Ὀδύσσειαν ἔπη Μ,β,  
πεποιηκῶς ἤδη τὴν Ἰλιάδα ἐπῶν Μ,εφ'.<sup>27</sup> παραγενό-  
μενον δὲ ἐκείθεν εἰς Ἀθήνας αὐτὸν ξενισθῆναί φασι  
παρὰ Μέδοντι τῶι βασιλεῖ τῶν Ἀθηναίων. ἐν δὲ τῶι  
βουλευτηρίῳ ψύχους ὄντος καὶ πυρὸς καιομένου σχε-  
διάσαι λέγεται τούσδε τοὺς στίχους (Erigr. 13)·

ἄνδρὸς μὲν στέφανος<sup>28</sup> παῖδες, πύργοι δὲ  
πόλῃς,  
ἵπποι δ' αὖ πεδίου κόσμος, νῆες δὲ θαλάσσης,  
λαὸς δ' εἰν ἀγορῇσι καθήμενος εἰσοράασθαι  
αἰθομένου δὲ πυρὸς γεραρώτερος οἶκος ιδέσθαι  
ἥματι χειμερίῳ, ὅπότε ἂν νείφησι Κρονίων.

- 17 ἐκείθεν δὲ παραγενόμενος εἰς Κόρινθον ἐρραψώδει  
τὰ ποιήματα. τιμηθεὶς δὲ μεγάλως παραγίνεται εἰς  
Ἄργος, καὶ λέγει ἐκ τῆς Ἰλιάδος (2.559–568ab) τὰ ἔπη  
τάδε·

οἱ δ' Ἄργός τ' εἶχον Τίρυνθά τε τειχιόεσσαν  
Ἑρμιόνην τ' Ἀσίνην τε, βαθὺν κατὰ κόλπον  
ἐχούσας,  
Τροιζῆν' Ἡϊόνας τε καὶ ἀμπελόεντ' Ἐπίδauρον

## 1. THE CONTEST

They gave him a silver cup, which he dedicated to Apollo at Delphi with the inscription:

Lord Phoibos, this fair gift I, Homer, give you  
for your thoughtfulness. May you ever grant me  
fame.

After this he composed the *Odyssey* (12,000 lines), having already composed the *Iliad* (15,500 lines). They say he went on from there to Athens, where he was the guest of Medon, the Athenian king. And in the council chamber, the weather being cold and a fire burning, he is said to have improvised these lines:

A man's crown is his sons, a city's its walls;  
horses adorn the plain, and ships the sea,  
and the people that sits in the gathering to behold;<sup>16</sup>  
but a burning fire makes the house a prouder sight  
on a winter's day, when Kronos' son sends snow.

From there he arrived in Corinth, and recited his poems. Receiving much honor there, he arrived in Argos, and spoke these verses from the *Iliad*:

And those who held Argos and Tiryns with its walls,  
and Hermione and Asine, that command a deep gulf,  
Troezen and Eïones and vine-growing Epidaurus

<sup>16</sup> This line is a democratic adaptation of two lines in the version of the pseudo-Herodotean *Life*, 31.

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<sup>27</sup> M, β . . . M, ε φ' Nietzsche: μ β φ . . . μ ε cod.

<sup>28</sup> στέφανος vit. Hdt.: στέφανοι cod.

νῆσόν τ' Αἴγιναν Μάσητά τε κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν,  
 τῶν αὖθ' ἡγεμόνευε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης  
 Τυδεΐδης, οὗ πατὴρ ἔχων μένος Οἰνείδαο,  
 καὶ Σθένελος, Καπαηὸς ἀγακλειτοῦ φίλος υἱός·  
 τοῖσι δ' ἄμ' Εὐρύπυλος τρίτατος κίεν ἰσόθεος  
 φῶς,

Μηκιστέως υἱὸς Ταλαϊονίδαο ἄνακτος.  
 ἐκ πάντων δ' ἡγεῖτο βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης·  
 τοῖσι δ' ἄμ' ὀγδώκοντα μέλαιναι νῆες ἔποντο·  
 ἐν δ' ἄνδρες πολέμοιο δαήμονες ἐστιχόωντο  
 Ἀργεῖοι λινοθώρηκες, κέντρα πτολέμοιο.

τῶν δὲ Ἀργείων οἱ προεστηκότες ὑπερβολῇ χαρέντες  
 ἐπὶ τῷ ἐγκωμιάζεσθαι τὸ γένος αὐτῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐνδο-  
 ξοτάτου τῶν ποιητῶν, αὐτὸν μὲν πολυτελέσι δωρεαῖς  
 ἐτίμησαν, εἰκόνα δὲ χαλκῇν ἀναστήσαντες ἐψηφί-  
 σαντο θυσίαν ἐπιτελεῖν Ὀμήρῳ καθ' ἡμέραν καὶ  
 κατὰ μῆνα καὶ κατ' ἐνιαυτόν, <καὶ> ἄλλην θυσίαν  
 πενταετηρίδα εἰς Χίον ἀποστέλλειν. ἐπιγράφουσι δὲ  
 ἐπὶ τῆς εἰκόνης αὐτοῦ.

θεῖος Ὀμηρος ὃδ' ἐστίν, ὃς Ἑλλάδα τὴν  
 μέγαν αὖχον

πᾶσαν ἐκόσμησεν καλλιπεῖ σοφίῃ,  
 ἔξοχα δ' Ἀργείους, οἳ τὴν θεοτείχεα Τροίην  
 ἤρπυσαν ποινῇ<sup>29</sup> ἡυκόμου Ἑλένης.

οὗ χάριν ἔστησεν δῆμος μεγαλόπτολις αὐτόν  
 ἐνθάδε καὶ τιμαῖς ἀμφίπει ἀθανάτων.



## 1. THE CONTEST

and the island of Aegina, and Mases, Achaeans, lads,  
their leader was Diomedes, good at the war cry—  
Tydeus' son, with the force of his father, the son of  
Oineus—

and Sthenelos, glorious Capaneus' dear son.  
With those two went Eurypylus, godlike man,  
the son of Mekisteus, son of lord Talaos;  
but the leader of all was Diomedes, good at the war  
cry.

With them there followed eighty dark ships,  
and in them were ranged men skilled in fighting,  
the linen-corslet Argives, goads of war.

The Argive officials were exceedingly delighted to hear  
their race being praised by the most celebrated of poets.  
They honored him with costly gifts, set up a bronze statue  
of him, and voted to perform a sacrifice for Homer daily,  
monthly, and yearly, and to send another one every fifth  
year to Chios. On his statue they inscribed:

This is the godly Homer, who has adorned  
all of proud Hellas with his verbal art,  
above all the Argives, who smashed Troy's god-built  
wall  
as restitution for what fair-tressed Helen did.  
Because of this the people of this great city  
has set him here, and treats him with honors  
divine.

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<sup>29</sup> *πουνῆς* cod.: corr. Barnes.

- 18 ἐνδιατρίψας δὲ τῇ πόλει χρόνον τινὰ διέπλευσεν εἰς Δῆλον εἰς τὴν πανηγυριν. καὶ σταθεὶς ἐπὶ τὸν κεράτινον βωμὸν λέγει ὕμνον εἰς Ἀπόλλωνα, οὗ ἡ ἀρχή (Hymn. Ap. 1).

μνήσομαι οὐδὲ λάθωμαι Ἀπόλλωνος ἐκάτοιο.

ρήθέντος δὲ τοῦ ὕμνου οἱ μὲν Ἴωνες πολίτην αὐτὸν κοινὸν ἐποιήσαντο, Δῆλιοι δὲ γράψαντες τὰ ἔπη εἰς λεύκωμα ἀνέθηκαν ἐν τῷ τῆς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερῷ.

τῆς δὲ πανηγύρεως λυθείσης ὁ ποιητὴς εἰς Ἴον ἔπλευσε πρὸς Κρεώφυλον, κακεῖ χρόνον διέτριβε πρεσβύτης ὢν ἡδῆ. ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς θαλάσσης καθήμενος παίδων τινῶν ἀφ' ἀλείας ἐρχομένων ὥς φασι πυνθόμενος (Epiqr. 17).

ἄνδρες ἀπ' Ἀρκαδίας<sup>30</sup> θηρήτορες, ἧ ῥ' ἔχομέν  
τι;

εἰπόντων δὲ ἐκείνων

ὅσ' ἔλομεν λιπόμεσθα, ὅσ' οὐχ ἔλομεν  
φερόμεσθα,

οὐ νοήσας τὸ λεχθὲν ἤρετο αὐτοὺς ὅ τι λέγοιεν. οἱ δὲ φασιν ἐν ἀλείαι μὲν ἀγρεῦσαι μηδέν, ἐφθειρίσθαι δέ, καὶ τῶν φθειρῶν οὓς ἔλαβον καταλιπεῖν, οὓς δὲ οὐκ ἔλαβον ἐν τοῖς ἱματίοις φέρειν. ἀναμνησθεὶς δὲ τοῦ

<sup>30</sup> ἀπ' Ἀρκαδίας cod., item Procl. et Anon. II, III: ἄγρης ἀλῆς Koechly.

## 1. THE CONTEST

After he had spent some time in the city, he sailed to Delos for the panegyris, and taking his stand at the Altar of Horns, he recited the *Hymn to Apollo*, which begins

Let me call to mind and not neglect Apollo the far-shooter.

When the hymn had been recited, the assembled Ionians conferred joint citizenship on him, while the Delians wrote out the verses on a placard and dedicated it in the temple of Artemis.

When the panegyris broke up, the poet sailed to Ios to see Creophylus, and spent some time there; by now he was getting on in years. As he was sitting by the sea, they say he asked some boys who were returning from fishing,

O huntsmen from Arcadia,<sup>17</sup> have we caught anything?

When they replied,

The ones we caught we left behind, the ones we missed we carry,

he did not understand, and asked them what they meant. They explained that they had caught nothing on their fishing expedition, but they had de-loused themselves, and the lice they had caught they had left behind, but the ones they failed to catch they were still carrying in their clothes.

<sup>17</sup> "From Arcadia" makes no sense, and may be an ancient corruption for "of marine prey" (*ἀγρῆς ἀλίσης*). But other Lives have the same reading, so it is likely to have stood in the *Certamen* from the start.

μαντείου, ὅτι τὸ τέλος αὐτοῦ ἦκοι τοῦ βίου, ποιεῖ τὸ τοῦ τάφου αὐτοῦ ἐπίγραμμα. ἀναχωρῶν δὲ ἐκεῖθεν, ὄντος πηλοῦ ὀλισθὼν καὶ πεσὼν ἐπὶ τὴν πλευράν, τριταῖος ὥς φασι τελευτᾷ· καὶ ἐτάφη ἐν Ἰωί. ἔστι δὲ τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τόδε·

ἐνθάδε τὴν ἱερὴν κεφαλὴν κατὰ γαῖα καλύπτει,  
ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων κοσμήτορα, θεῖον Ὅμηρον.

## 1. THE CONTEST

Then he remembered the prophecy, that the end of his life had come, so he composed his own tomb inscription. And as he was returning from there, the ground being muddy, he slipped and fell on his side, and within three days, so they say, he died. He was buried in Ios, and this is the inscription:

Here the earth conceals that sacred head,  
adorner of warrior heroes, the godly Homer.